

Alabama State Department of Education



Request for Proposal

RFP ALSDE 2024-01

MARKETING CAMPAIGN FOR TEACHERS

Alabama State Department of Education

COMMUNICATION DIVISION

Note: FAXED OR E-MAILED PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Inquiries and response submissions related to this RFP are to be addressed to:

Cindy Gillespie

Office of Operations

Alabama State Department of Education

50 N. Ripley Street, Room P305

Gordon Persons Building

Montgomery, AL 36104

Email: cgillespie@alsde.edu

Deadline:

Proposals must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. on January 4, 2024.

It is required that each vendor clearly mark the envelope RFP ALSDE 2024-01 in the lower left corner of the envelope (Response packages that are not marked will be rejected).

The proposal package must contain the following:

1. **Original proposal plus four copies** with original signatures (The proposal must be signed by an official authorized to legally bind the vendor to the information provided). **One (1) electronic copy** on a USB flash drive in MS Word format.
2. Must be currently registered with The Alabama Department of Finance, Division of Purchasing as a State Vendor and provide vendor number. <http://www.purchasing.alabama.gov>
3. The vendor must complete the affidavit for business entity/employer/vendor. Verification of enrollment in E-verify should be presented on the form found in Appendix A.

Proposal Opening

January 5, 2024, 9:00 am

Gordon Persons Building, P-103A Conference Room

50 North Ripley Street

Montgomery, AL 36104

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Section 1.00 Administrative Overview

1.1 Purpose and Background

Purpose:

The purpose of the RFP is to solicit competitive, sealed proposals to establish a contract for marketing services to promote teacher recruitment/retention, and public education statewide.

The ability to promote the benefits, plans, and programs teachers can receive in Alabama in an effort to attract the best and brightest educators possible is essential. Nothing has a greater impact on the educational outcomes of a student than the caliber of their teacher. For educators who want to remain in the education field, as well as people who are contemplating education for a career, outreach is critical. The desire is to reach existing and potential educators, as well as tout the programs and initiatives of the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) in an effort to improve public perception, as well as promote and elevate the noble profession of education.

This statewide/regional effort is expected to reach a diverse audience in every possible demographic group that may have an interest in staying or delving into public education. The outreach desired will be consistent with the image and style of ALSDE branding, and will include, but is not limited to, the following:

- **Internet/Online and Other Electronic Marketing:** Targeted ad campaigns utilizing electronic media including but not limited to social media, music, audiobook, and professional training platforms, email newsletters, Search Engine Marketing, Search Engine Optimization, native ads, remarketing, video ads, and geofencing marketing.
- **Recruitment Materials:** The production of tangible materials (example: lanyards, pens, notepads, lapel pins, etc.) giveaways for recruitment purposes.
- **Broadcast Television:** The production of 30 second/one-minute commercials for use on major broadcast networks, and online television platforms (Hulu, Prime, Spectrum, etc.)
- **Targeted Marketing:** Billboard. Radio, and television recruitment efforts specifically targeted towards Alabama's Blackbelt region, recruiting diverse populations.
- **Target Career Changers:** A focused effort to recruit middle-aged individuals who may be exploring post-career options or changing careers midstream.
- **Billboards:** To optimize premium visibility, traditional billboards at strategic streets and intersections in major cities and near prominent venues around the state.
- **Radio:** From 30 second/one-minute advertisements to possible sponsorship on a diverse variety of radio broadcasts, the radio campaign needs to reach wide audiences with positioning on multi-cultural radio platforms, and be available both in English and Spanish, depending on the primary audience of the station.
- **Print Media:** Both online and physical versions of print media will be used – particularly those with an emphasis on education, parenting, housing, health, and community.
- **Marketing Merchandise:** ALSDE collateral, including but not limited to apparel, promotional items (mouse pads, pens, wristbands, etc.)

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Background:

Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day is not only our department's motto, but a guiding philosophy about the work that we undertake on behalf of the 740,000 children who enter into our public schools every day. Our guiding philosophy is that *every child* should be afforded every chance to succeed in school and, thus, make wise choices every day leading to success in career, family, and life after high school. Indeed, from the first day of kindergarten all that we do in K-12 schools is designed to empower students through education, to open new opportunities and widen horizons, and, ultimately, to help them to use knowledge and experience to make wise decisions.

Our aspiration is that with our support, all children will seize the opportunities, rise to the challenges, and overcome any barriers in their way. In order for the ALSDE to meet the challenge of supporting every child, every chance, every day. We must recruit the best and brightest educators to teach in all areas of the state. From the most rural communities to urban and suburban areas – excellent teachers make a significant difference in the educational experience our students experience.

A successful marketing campaign will bring into fruition two fundamental results: 1) an increase in the number of highly qualified people wanting to receive or maintain a valid Alabama teaching certificate. 2) An increase in the favorable perception that the public has of both the input into public education, and the outcome of public education's product – students who are prepared for life after high school.

The ALSDE has an established Style Guide, complete with imaging/branding specifics. Within the framework provided by the Style Guide, a marketing firm will have the talent, skills, and ability to create new, attention-grabbing advertising that informs the public of programs and initiatives that will improve the quality of work for educators and the quality of education for students.

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1.2 Anticipated Time Table

January 4, 2024	Proposal Submission Deadline
January 5, 2024	Bid Opening

1.3 Proposal Evaluation

An Evaluation Team will review the proposals and make a recommendation. The criteria listed below will be used to evaluate the proposals for the purpose of ranking them in relative position based on how fully each proposal meets the requirements of this RFP.

Evaluation Criteria:

Vendor qualifications and experience	25 points
Cost Proposal	25 points
Detailed description and delivery of training materials, presentations, and/or modules	50 points

Best and Final Offers:

The ALSDE may either accept a vendor's initial proposal by award of a contract or enter into discussions with vendors whose proposals are deemed to be reasonably acceptable consideration for award. After discussions are concluded, a vendor may be allowed to submit a "Best and Final Offer" for consideration in a manner and method prescribed by the ALSDE. By submitting a proposal each vendor accepts and agrees to all conditions and requirements herein.

The ALSDE will make all decisions regarding evaluation of the proposal. The ALSDE reserves the right to judge and determine whether a request is compliant with and has satisfactorily met the requirements of the RFP. The ALSDE reserves the right to waive technical and other defects if, in its judgment, the interest of the ALSDE so requires. Any further information disclosed about the RFP during this process will be provided to all vendors in a manner and method prescribed by the ALSDE.

Rejection of Proposal:

ALSDE reserves the right to reject any or all proposals which are deemed to be non-responsive, late in submission, or unsatisfactory in any way. ALSDE shall have no obligation to award a contract for work, goods and/or services as a result of this RFP.

Qualified bidders aggrieved in connection with the with the solicitation of a contract may protest to the Chief Procurement Officer. See generally State of Alabama Department of Finance Administrative Code Regulations at <https://finance.alabama.gov/media/rnii4ga1/administrative-code-355-4-1-01-thru-06.pdf>.

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Confidentiality:

All information contained in the RFP is considered to be the exclusive property of the ALSDE. Recipients of this RFP are not to disclose any information contained within the RFP unless such information is publically available. This RFP is provided for the sole purpose of allowing Vendors to respond to these specifications.

Selection Process:

The number of grants awarded depends on the number of proposals submitted and the quality of the proposed projects, funding availability and the best interests of the Agency.

The ALSDE will select the vendor that provides the most technically sound and cost-effective proposal that best fits the needs of the ALSDE. Final selection of the successful vendor will not be based solely on cost. The vendor product will be evaluated primarily on the scope of the activities linked to associated costs as detailed in the RFP. RFPs will be reviewed to ascertain that minimum requirements have been met. The ALSDE reserves the right to conduct discussions with potential vendors in order to clarify information contained in their proposals, but the ALSDE has no obligation to do so. The vendor will provide notice to the ALSDE any partnership with another firm to provide parts of the solution; however, the vendor must provide management of the partner and is responsible for all project performance. Any subcontractor or partner will be subject to the same vetting process as the vendor, and the vendor is responsible for ensuring that each subcontractor acknowledges and is contractually bound by the staffing plan and other commitments listed in this RFP.

Unless provided by law, nothing in this RFP shall be construed to create any legal obligation on the part of ALSDE or any respondents. ALSDE reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to amend, suspend, terminate, or reissue the RFP in whole or in part, at any stage. In no event shall ALSDE be liable to respondents for any cost or damages incurred in connection with the RFP process, including, but not limited to, any and all costs of preparing a response to this RFP or any other costs incurred in reliance on this RFP. No respondent shall be entitled to repayment from ALSDE for any costs, expenses, or fees related to the RFP. All supporting documentation submitted in response to the RFP will become the property of the ALSDE. Respondents may also withdraw their interest in the RFP, in writing, at any point in time, as more information becomes known. If, within the confines of this RFP, the vendor provides intellectual property be it understood that all RFP contents are subject to Open Records Act laws and thus are subsequently in the public domain.

Intent to Award

Division of Procurement will send out an intent to award to participating suppliers, defining the protest period. The CPO, Chief Procurement Officer, is the awarding authority and as such is a signatory on the agreement/contract.

Disclaimer Notice:

The ALSDE shall not be liable for any costs associated with the preparation of proposals or negotiations of a contract incurred by any party.

Availability of Funds:

It is expressly understood and agreed that the obligations of the ALSDE to proceed is conditioned upon the continued availability of funds that may be expended for these purposes.

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1.4 Conditions and Terms

Contract Terms:

The contract resulting from this RFP may be renewable for four (4) additional years pending written agreement of the vendor & ALSDE, dependent upon required state approvals, availability of funds, performance evaluations of the project, at the full discretion of the ALSDE. The contract will commence pending Legislative Review Committee approval and Governor's signature.

The vendor shall be fully prepared to commence work after full execution of the contract by parties and the receipt of required governmental approvals.

Proposals should reference each element in the RFP by number on the cover of each copy and be arranged in the same sequence. All fees and costs are to be stated in United States currency. Vendors must reply to each element of the RFP.

Section 2.00 Scope

2.1 Scope of Vendor's Work and Responsibilities

- Work with ALSDE Communications staff to reach the goals of increased awareness and perception.
- Raise program awareness statewide with an emphasis on ways to improve teacher recruitments and retention.
- Maintenance (delivering content, responding to comments) of all social media accounts related to this education promotion.
- Existing ALSDE branding and adherence to the ALSDE Style Guide name will be used in this marketing campaign.
- Use of media (social media, television, billboard, radio, newspaper, magazine) to outreach statewide
- Goods, services, and delivery of ALSDE items.
- Increase the number of people seeking certification to teach in Alabama.
- Develop materials to promote to all Alabama communities (including African American, Hispanic and Korean populations.)
- Create techniques to help the ALSDE promote and enhance existing programs.
- Responsible for providing updates on engagement and outreach efforts to potential candidates.

2.2 Scope of Alabama State Department of Education's Work and Responsibilities

Specific responsibilities of the ALSDE are stated below:

- ALSDE Communications staff will work closely with the vendor to facilitate marketing and promotion that enhances existing programs and recruits/retains educators.
- Coordinate marketing locations and dates with awarded vendor.
- Information for services will be provided by the Communications section of the ALSDE.

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3.1 Requirements of Proposal

The vendor must provide the following mandatory information. **Failure to provide this information may be cause for the proposal to be rejected.** Qualifications, experience, and cost will be evaluated for contract award. The proposal may be submitted under the same cover with Vendor Requirements and Cost Proposal in two distinct sections. E-verify information is required to be submitted for all employees to include contractors of the vendors if necessary and applicable.

Part I

Signed Cover Letter:

The cover letter shall serve as the first page of the vendor's proposal. The vendor shall complete the cover letter and attach it to the proposal in response to the RFP. The cover letter must be signed by an official authorized to legally bind the vendor. It will state that the vendor is a legal entity that will meet the specifications. The cover letter must accompany the submitted proposal. The letter accompanying the proposal must have original signatures and must include contact numbers and e-mail addresses for the authorized official signing the letters.

Part II

Vendor Qualification and Experience:

Vendor shall provide satisfactory evidence of the vendor's capability to coordinate the types of activities and to provide the services described in the RFP in a timely manner. Special attention should be given to the discussion of qualifications. The discussion shall include a description of the vendor's background and relevant experience as related to the required activities in the RFP.

Part III

Vendor shall provide a detailed plan describing how the services will be performed to meet the requirements of the RFP. The description shall encompass the requirements of this RFP. The response must be prepared and organized in a clear and concise manner that is easily understandable.

Vendor Organization:

Describe your organizational structure and explain how your organization qualifies to be responsive to the requirements of this RFP.

References:

The vendor shall provide a minimum of three (3) references that can support and validate training and/or projects and outcomes, including names or persons who may be contacted, position of person, addresses, and phone numbers where similar training and/or projects to that described in this RFP have been conducted.

Executive Summary:

An executive summary is required. This summary will condense and highlight the contents of the vendor's proposal.

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Part IV

Cost Proposal:

Vendor shall include the fee structure and pricing for the training sessions/program. The vendor shall submit a cost proposal in addition to other required information.

Flat rates for half and/or whole day training sessions should be inclusive of travel and/or supplies and materials costs and identify if the training is in person or virtual, and the proposed number of participants. Flat rates for consulting, coaching, and/or professional services should stipulate the cost per hour and the proposed number of hours. Project costs must include all proposed necessary charges to be made by the grantee in accomplishing the objectives of the grant during the specified grant period (initial grants are generally for a one-year period unless otherwise noted).

Subcontractor Disclosure:

If the execution of work to be performed requires the hiring of Subcontractors, **you must clearly state this in the bid proposal and provide qualification for such individuals.** Sub-Contractors must be identified and the services they will provide or work they will perform must be clearly defined. The ALSDE will not refuse a proposal based upon use of a Sub-Contractor; however, the ALSDE reserves the right to refuse the Sub-contractor you have selected. Contractor and associated personnel shall remain solely responsible for the performance of all work, including work that may be sub-contracted.

Describe your rationale for utilizing Subcontractors including relevant past experience partnering with stated Subcontractor(s). Documents for E-verification of subcontractors are the sole responsibility of the contractor and must be available upon request to ensure compliance.

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Section 4.00 General Terms and Conditions

4.1 Governance

This RFP and its terms shall be governed and construed according to the laws of the State of Alabama. Any dispute arising out of this RFP shall be brought in the State of Alabama, with venue in Montgomery County, Alabama. Vendors agree to comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

4.2 Immigration

The proposal must contain a statement that the firm is aware of and in compliance with the requirements of the Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act; a statement that the vendor is enrolled in the E-Verify as required by Section 31-13-9 (b), Code of Alabama 1975, as amended:

BEASON-HAMMON ALABAMA TAXPAYER AND CITIZEN PROTECTION ACT

COMPLIANCE

The Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act (31-13-1 et seq, Code of Alabama, 1975 as amended by Act 2012-491) regulates illegal immigration in the State of Alabama. All contracts with the State or political subdivision thereof must fully comply with each provision as provided by law.

A proposal must include a statement that the vendor has knowledge of this law and is in compliance. Before a contract is signed, the vendor awarded the contract must submit a Certificate of Compliance using the form at Appendix A. E-Verify enrollment can be accomplished at the website of the United States Department of Homeland Security at <http://www.uscis.gov>.

See Section 10 for additional language required by Section 10(k) of the Act to be included in the contract.

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4.3 Conflict of Interest

The vendor attests that no employee, officer, or agent of the vendor shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract if a real or apparent conflict of interest may be involved. A conflict would arise when the employee, officer, agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein has a financial or other interest in the organization selected for an award. The officers, employees, and agents of the vendor, if selected as the career planning system vendor, shall neither award nor offer gratuities, favors, nor anything of monetary value from vendors or subcontractors.

4.4 Discrimination

Alabama Non-Discrimination Statement:

No person shall be denied employment, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity on the basis of disability, gender, race, religion, national origin, color, age, genetic information, or any other category protected under the law. Ref: Sec. 1983, Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C.; Title VI and VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Sec. 504; Age Discrimination in Employment Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008; Equal Pay Act of 1963; Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972; Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008. Title IX Coordinator, P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2101 or call (334) 694-4717.

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APPENDIX "A"

State of _____)
County of _____)

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE BEASON-HAMMON ALABAMA TAXPAYER AND CITIZEN PROTECTION ACT (ACT 2011-535, as amended by ACT 2012-491)

DATE: _____

RE Contract/Grant/Incentive (describe by number or subject):

_____ by and between
_____ (Contractor/Grantee) and
_____ (State Agency, Department or Public Entity)

The undersigned hereby certifies to the State of Alabama as follows:

1. The undersigned holds the position of _____ with the Contractor/Grantee named above, and is authorized to provide representations set out in this Certificate as the official and binding act of that entity, and has knowledge of the provisions of THE BEASON-HAMMON ALABAMA TAXPAYER AND CITIZEN PROTECTION ACT (ACT 2011-535 of the Alabama Legislature, as amended by ACT 2012-491) which is described herein as "the Act."
2. Using the following definitions from Section 3 of the Act, select and initial either (a) or (b), below, to describe the Contractor/Grantee's business structure.

BUSINESS ENTITY. Any person or group of persons employing one or more persons performing or engaging in any activity, enterprise, profession, or occupation for gain, benefit, advantage, or livelihood, whether for profit or not for profit.

a. Self-employed individuals, business entities filing articles of incorporation, partnerships, limited partnerships, limited liability companies, foreign corporations, foreign limited partnerships, and foreign limited liability companies authorized to transact business in this state, business trusts, and any business entity that registers with the Secretary of State.

b. Any business entity that possesses a business license, permit, certificate, approval, registration, charter, or similar form of authorization issued by the state, any business entity that is exempt by law from obtaining such a business license, and any business entity that is operating unlawfully without a business license.

EMPLOYER. Any person, firm, corporation, partnership, joint stock association, agent, manager, representative, foreman, or other person having control or custody of any employment, place of employment, or of any employee, including any person or entity employing any person for hire within the State of Alabama, including a public employer. This term shall not include the occupant of a household contracting with another person to perform casual domestic labor within the household.

____ (a) The Contractor/Grantee is a business entity or employer as those terms are defined in Section 3 of the Act.

____ (b) The Contractor/Grantee is not a business entity or employer as those terms are defined in Section 3 of the Act.

3. As of the date of this Certificate, the Contractor/Grantee does not knowingly employ an unauthorized alien within the State of Alabama and hereafter it will not knowingly employ, hire for employment, or continue to employ an unauthorized alien within the State of Alabama;
4. The Contractor/Grantee is enrolled in E-Verify unless it is not eligible to enroll because of the rules of that program or other factors beyond its control.

Certified this _____ day of _____ 20_____.

Name of Contractor/Grantee/Recipient
By: _____
Its _____

The above Certification was signed in my presence by the person whose name appears above, on this _____ day of _____ 20_____.

WITNESS: _____

Printed Name of Witness

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Question and Answer

Is this request for just concept, creative and producing a final product that will be distributed from your department?

No, this request covers concept, creative, production, and distribution to various outlets.

Will this be a multimedia campaign?

Yes

Has a marketing plan been developed for the campaign and has a target market been identified? Will the work include us developing a media campaign?

We have identified target audiences and geographic areas of interest, but the company who fulfills this request will develop the overall campaign.

Is the target market geographically the entire state of Alabama?

Yes....and then some. We recruit teachers from Alabama and our neighboring states. Some outreach to our closest media markets in those states are fine.

Is there a set budget that has already been established for creative and media to implement the campaign?

Budget information is not communicated, it is the burden of the vendor to supply this information.

Is there a timeline for having the campaign ready to implement.?

Implementation should be from Spring, 2024 until Summer, 2025

Is this a contract for a completely new campaign associated with [We Teach Alabama](#)? Or, is this bid associated with a continuation of past campaigns?

This is for a completely new campaign, unless the company who worked on it previously receives the bid, in which case they may pick up on where they worked previously.

Has a NTE annual budget been established for this contract? Can you share that information with us (even if just a broad range)?

No firm budget has been announced.

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Will the selected agency be responsible for securing paid media placements on behalf of the ALSDE campaign?

Yes

Can you share more information about the marketing/communications team that the selected agency will be working with?

The selected agency will work autonomously, except for guidance from the ALSDE, primarily the Communications section and our teacher recruitment section.

Increased teaching certificates is obviously one of your goals. What KPIs/metrics have been used to quantify results for increased awareness and perception of ALSDE?

So far, awareness is only measured by outreach (clicks, usage of the website, etc.) No survey or quantifiable research to measure impact.

Are there any specific date goals or deadlines to have this campaign in the market?

Implementation by Spring 2024, to run for the next year.

Our understanding is that ALSDE has worked with Big Communications, are they being included in this opportunity?

Any vendor listed for this commodity has been invited to this RFP, we have no way of knowing who will or won't apply.

Is Public Relations/Earned media handled in-house or is there an external agency in place?

The awarded agency, with limited assistance from the ALSDE Communications team, will provide earned media.

Regarding geography and knowing this is a statewide effort, can you provide more detail about how you've segmented your paid media spending in the past?

This is a statewide campaign with a concentrated focus on the Black Belt and other hard to staff areas of the state. Also potential candidates for teachers come from our surrounding states, so some focus on the media markets in areas near our borders is good.

Are there any similar campaigns from other states that your team believes are really effective?

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None identified.

Is there past marketing research that has been conducted you would be willing to share? Is there a desire or willingness to conduct new research that might help refine new strategies?

No. A new study is possible, but keep in mind we are trying to implement a strategy for Spring 2024 to Spring 2025

What is the make-up of the decision-making team (titles are fine)?

We have a committee of stakeholders.

Would anyone from the ALSDE team be able or willing to speak with us prior to the submission of the RFP per your procurement guidelines?

No private discussions are not permissible, all questions must be emailed.